

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY MISREPRESENTS PHILIP MAURO'S POSITION ON BIBLE VERSIONS

June 26, 2003 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

In the Introduction to a 1981 reprint of a book by Philip Mauro, Bob Jones University Press glaringly misrepresents Mauro's position on the Bible Version issue and takes a cheap shot at contemporary defenders of the King James Bible.

The book is *The World and Its God* by Philip Mauro (1859-1952). It was first published in 1905, and the edition reprinted by BJU Press is the second edition of 1908. Consider the following paragraph from the Introduction:

"The Scripture quoted in this book is exactly as was used in the second edition printed in January 1908. Mr. Mauro used the Revised Version (RV) of 1881 heavily in his quotations. Some contemporary authors have used his name and his written defense of the King James Version to defend their own King-James-only position. Mr. Mauro's frequent use of the Revised Version gives the lie to the claims of those who would misrepresent Mr. Mauro's position as being in line with the King-James-only heresy" (Introduction to the BJU Press reprint of Mauro's *The World and Its God*).

BJU'S MISREPRESENTATION OF PHILIP MAURO

This statement grossly misrepresents Philip Mauro's position on the Bible Version issue. BJU Press states that Mauro used the Revised Version in 1908, and he did. The story does not end there, though. WHAT BJU PRESS DOES NOT TELL ITS READERS IS THAT MAURO CHANGED HIS POSITION IN REGARD TO THE REVISED VERSION AND THAT IN 1924 HE WROTE A POWERFUL BOOK AGAINST MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE REVISED VERSION!

SOME EXCERPTS FROM MAURO'S WHICH VERSION

My library contains an original copy of Mauro's 1924 book *Which Version?* The following quotes from this book define Mauro's position on the Bible version issue from his own pen:

"... it should be understood that what was contemplated by those who were responsible for the appointment of that Committee [Revised Version of 1881] was simply a revision of the Version of 1611; and had the Committee confined themselves to the task actually entrusted to them, and kept within the limits of the instructions given to them, the results of their long labors would no doubt have been a gain and a blessing to all the English-speaking nations, and through them to all mankind.

“But instead of a Revised version of the long accepted English Bible, the Committee brought forth (so far at least as the New Testament was concerned) a New Version. This fact was not disclosed by them. The ‘Preface to the Edition of A.D. 1885’ gives no indication of it; but through the vigilance of certain godly and scholarly men (Dean Burgon in particular) the important fact was discerned and brought to light that the Committee had produced, not a Revised Version (though that was the name given it) but a New Version, which was a translation of a ‘New Greek Text.’”

NOTE FROM BROTHER CLOUD: These facts about the English Revision of 1881 explain why many men who at first supported the project later rejected it. The revision committee was charged with producing a simple updating of the KJV and were required to make “as few changes as possible.” Instead, Westcott and Hort secretly introduced a radically new Greek New Testament. The rest of the committee, composed of a Unitarian and theological liberals and weak men who claimed to be evangelical in doctrine but who were willing to yoke together with heretics, largely acquiesced to Hort’s enthusiasm. Now we continue from Mauro’s *Which Version*:

“The importance of this fact will be made evident as we proceed. It will also be a matter of much interest to show the sources from which this ‘New Greek Text’ was derived, and the means whereby its adoption by the Committee (as to which there was considerable mystery at the time) was brought about.

“It is now more than forty years--the Scriptural period of full probation--since the R.V. appeared; and as we contemplate the existing situation (in the year 1924) the most conspicuous fact that presents itself to our view is that the New Version (in either or both its forms) has not superseded the A.V. [Authorized Version or King James Version], and that there is not the faintest indication that it will ever do so. Indeed it appears that the R.V. is declining, rather than gaining, in favor, and that with Bible users of all classes, from the most scholarly to the most unlearned.

“This is a fact of much significance, and due consideration should be given to it in any attempt one might make to arrive at a just estimate of the relative values of the rival Versions. What is the explanation of this fact? It is not that the Old Version did not and does not admit of corrections and improvements. Nor is it that the Revisers did not make them; for it cannot be denied that the R.V. contains many improved readings. Yet for all that, AS THE EXPERIENCE OF A WHOLE GENERATION HAS NOW CONCLUSIVELY DEMONSTRATED, THE A.V. RETAINS, AND IN ALL PROBABILITY WILL CONTINUE TO RETAIN, ITS LONG UNDISPUTED PLACE AS THE STANDARD ENGLISH BIBLE.

“This failure of the new Versions, or either of them, to displace the old, is attributed by some to the supposed conservatism of people in general, and to their assumed reluctance to accept changes of any sort. But we should say the truth in this regard is rather that people in our time are unduly ready, and even eager, to welcome every kind of a change. Radical innovations are the order of the day. On every hand we see the ‘old’ being discarded for the ‘new’ and the ‘up-to-date’; and in no

department of human affairs is this eagerness for change more manifest than in the field of literature (if that word may be properly applied to what people read now-a-days).

“Moreover, the generation of those who had known only the A.V., and who therefore might have been disposed to cling to it for that reason alone, is now passed away; and the fact which confronts us is that WHEREAS THOSE LIVING AT THAT TIME (1881-1885) SEEMED QUITE READY AND WILLING TO WELCOME THE R.V., FULLY EXPECTING IT TO BE A REAL IMPROVEMENT UPON THE OLDER VERSION, THE ALMOST UNANIMOUS JUDGMENT OF THE NEXT SUCCEEDING GENERATION IS THAT THE OLDER VERSION IS TO BE PREFERRED.

“But, looking beyond and above the sphere of mere human judgment, and recognizing the superintendence of the Spirit of God in all that has to do with the Word of God, we feel warranted in concluding from the facts stated above that there are Divine reasons for the retention of the A.V. in the favor of the people of God. We will try, therefore, to point out some of those reasons” (Philip Mauro, *Which Version*, Introduction).

Mauro’s position is obvious from these quotations. From there, he proceeded to defend the Greek Received Text against the critical text founded upon modern textual criticism and the King James Version against the Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901.

In chapter three, Mauro discussed the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts, which are highly revered by modern textual critics. He concluded that they “are so corrupt upon their face as to justify the conclusion that they owe their survival solely to their bad reputation.” He said further, “... when the two MSS. which controlled the Westcott and Hort text are scrutinized [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus], they are found to contain such internal proofs of their unreliability as to impeach their own testimony, and render them utterly unworthy of belief. They present the case of witnesses who have been caught in so many misstatements as to discredit their entire testimony.”

In chapter seven, Mauro defended the passages that are disputed or questioned in the modern versions. For example, he rejected the omission of Mark 16:8-20, the last half of Mark 6:11, and the word “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16. (All three of these textual corruptions appear in the NASV and the NIV either in the text itself or in a footnote.)

Mauro concluded chapter seven with these words: “Many other examples might be given of changes in the Greek Text made in deference to the two ancient Codices (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) and against the overwhelmingly preponderating testimony of Greek Mss. Versions and Fathers, changes which inflict manifest injury upon the Holy Scriptures. But the foregoing are amply sufficient to warrant the conclusion that the ‘New Greek Text’ underlying the R.V. (which is virtually that of Westcott and Hort) is vastly inferior to that of the A.V., and specifically that the witnesses whose testimony controlled the construction of the former are utterly untrustworthy.”

In chapter eight, Mauro mentions the *Tercentenary Commemoration Edition* of the Bible published in 1911 by Oxford Press in honor of the 300th anniversary of the King James Version. He observes that this work was done by a committee of 34 Hebrew and Greek scholars who were tasked with making “a careful scrutiny of the Text, with the view of correcting, in the light of the best modern research, such passages as are recognized by all scholars as in any measure misleading or needlessly obscure.” As a result, the *Tercentenary Bible* overwhelmingly confirmed the King James Version and rejected a whopping 98% of the changes introduced by the English Revisers of 1881. The Preface to the *Tercentenary Bible* concludes that THE “CONTINUED CONFIDENCE OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL THROUGHOUT ENGLISH-SPEAKING LANDS IN THE AUTHORIZED VERSION IS SEASONED AND MATURE.” Mauro agreed with this judgment without hesitation and added that he believed the King James Version would be the chief English Bible “to the end.”

In chapter ten, Mauro rejects the Westcott-Hort textual theories. In the first sentence of this chapter, MAURO DESCRIBES HIS OWN BOOK AS “UNCOMPROMISINGLY CONDEMNATORY” OF THE REVISED VERSION OF 1881. That is how Mauro himself characterizes his position toward the Revised Version, which is certainly contrary to the claim made by Bob Jones University Press.

Mauro concludes thusly:

“What shall we then say to these things? Shall we accept the R.V. (either the English or American) as a substitute for the A.V.? That question, we take it, has been settled by the almost unanimous rejection of the modern Versions.

“But can we profitably avail ourselves of the R.V. for any purpose? The conclusion to which the facts constrain the writer of these pages is that, conceding that there are improvements (and perhaps many) in the R.V., nevertheless, THE GREEK TEXT UPON WHICH IT IS BASED IS SO CORRUPT, THAT IT IS NOT SAFE TO ACCEPT ANY READING WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE A.V. UNTIL THE READER HAS ASCERTAINED THAT THE CHANGE IN QUESTION IS SUPPORTED BY PREPONDERATING TESTIMONY.

“Furthermore, in the important matter of the work of Translation we believe it to be the consensus of the best opinion that, in this feature also, THE AUTHORIZED VERSION IS VASTLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF 1881.

“And finally, as regards style and composition, THE ADVANTAGE IS SO GREATLY WITH THE OLD VERSION THAT IT WOULD BE LITTLE SHORT OF CALAMITY WERE IT TO BE SUPPLANTED BY THE R.V.” (Philip Mauro, *Which Version*, 1924).

It is obvious that Philip Mauro rejected the position that is promoted today by the Bob Jones University Greek department and that he stood much closer to many of the contemporary King

James Bible defenders than to the position defended by BJU and Central Theological Seminary and Detroit Theological Seminary, etc.

BJU'S MISREPRESENTATION OF "KING JAMES ONLY"

BJU Press not only misrepresented Mauro, it misrepresented contemporary defenders of the King James Bible. In the aforementioned Introduction, BJU Press says: "Some contemporary authors have used his [Mauro's] name and his written defense of the King James Version to defend their own King-James-only position. Mr. Mauro's frequent use of the Revised Version gives the lie to the claims of those who would misrepresent Mr. Mauro's position as being in line with the King-James-only heresy."

We have already seen who is giving the lie about what!

It is true that some contemporary defenders of the King James Bible have used Mauro's writings. To my knowledge, David Otis Fuller was the first to do this in the latter half of the 20th century. Dr. D. O. Fuller (1903-1988) was an influential and highly respected Fundamentalist leader. He obtained the Master of Divinity degree at Princeton, and was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree by Dallas Theological Seminary. He pastored the prominent Wealthy Street Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for 40 years (1934-74). While there, he founded the Grand Rapids Baptist Institute, which later became the Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College (today it is called Cornerstone College). Fuller co-founded the Children's Bible Hour radio program in 1942 and for 33 years was its chairman. For 52 years Fuller was on the board of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. He was on the Council of 14 in the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Fuller published between fifteen to twenty books.

When he first began investigating the Bible version issue for himself in the 1960s, Dr. Fuller came across many old books on the subject that were no longer commonly available. These included Philip Mauro's *Which Version*, John Burgon's *Revision Revised*, as well as works by Herman Hoskier, Joseph Philpot, Benjamin Wilkinson, Samuel Zwemer, and George Sayles Bishop, plus the works of a number of more contemporary writers, including Edward F. Hills, Terence Brown, and Wilbur Pickering. Dr. Fuller also obtained several post-graduate theses that defended the Received Text and the KJV in opposition to the modern versions. These include the following:

A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory--Alfred Martin's dissertation to the faculty of the Graduate School of Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1951.

The Preservation of the Scriptures--Donald Brake's dissertation to the faculty of the Department of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Theology Degree, May 1970.

An Evaluation of the Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism--Wilbur Pickering's thesis presented to the faculty of the Department of New Testament Literature

and Exegesis at the Dallas Theological Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Theology Degree, May 1968.

Dr. Fuller reprinted these works in the three books that he published on the Bible Version issue: *Which Bible* (1970), *True or False* (1973), and *Counterfeit or Genuine* (1975). Dr. Fuller wrote very little on the Bible version issue himself. What he did was put older works back into print so that his generation would be better able to look at all sides of the Bible version debate.

Contrary to the wild-eyed caricature that many have drawn of him, Dr. Fuller did not claim that the King James Bible was given by inspiration or that it contains some sort of advanced revelation over the Greek and Hebrew or that it could not be improved or changed. He claimed simply that it is the only existing reliable English translation of what he believed to be the preserved Greek and Hebrew text of Scripture. He did not believe the KJV has errors, but he differentiated plainly between improvements and errors.

“We do not say that the KJV does not permit of changes. There are a number that could be AND SHOULD BE made, but there is a vast difference between a change and an error” (Fuller, *Is the King James Version Nearest to the Original Autographs?* nd., p. 1).

Dr. Fuller’s position on Bible versions is given on pages 5 and 6 of his first book on the Bible version issue, *Which Bible*:

“The compiler of this book, and the able writers whom he quotes, all contend that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and authoritative word of God and that there has been a gracious exercise of the divine providence in its preservation and transmission. They are also deeply convinced that the inspired text is more faithfully represented by the Majority Text--sometimes called the Byzantine Text, the Received Text or the Traditional Text--than by the modern critical editions which attach too much weight to the Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus and their allies. For this reason the reader is encouraged to maintain confidence in THE KING JAMES VERSION AS A FAITHFUL TRANSLATION BASED UPON A RELIABLE TEXT” (Fuller, *Which Bible?* pp. 5,6).

The final eight words in that paragraph describe, in a nutshell, what David Otis Fuller believed about the King James Bible -- “a faithful translation based upon a reliable text.” That is also what I believe about the King James Bible. It is what Donald Waite and Ian Paisley and Thomas Strouse and Edward Hills and Del Johnson and Don Jasmin and thousands of other contemporary KJV defenders believe. We reject Ruckmanism and such cultic ideas as versions containing advanced revelation and being given by inspiration.

Yet Bob Jones University persists in defining “King James Only” as Ruckmanism and taking every occasion to lump every defender of the King James Bible into that category. This is a good debate tactic, but it is not honest and it does not help anyone come to the truth.

This is why they can claim that Philip Mauro was not “King James Only.” Even after being confronted with the facts in my report, they will doubtless counter that Mauro believed the Revised Version contained some improvements over the KJV and therefore he was not -- yea, could not possibly have been -- “King James Only.”

But as we have seen, Philip Mauro’s position was very close to the position of David Otis Fuller, one of the fathers of contemporary King James Bible defense.

And there is no doubt that Mauro plainly and publicly rejected the position on Bible versions that is promoted today by Bob Jones University.

In 2000 I published “Old Time Fundamentalists Who Defended the King James Bible.” (This is available in a multi-media video format.) Few men have researched the history of the Bible version debate more extensively than I have or have a larger library on that subject than I do. From my research, I picked out three examples of the many that could be given of old time fundamentalists who defended the King James Bible. These were Benjamin Franklin Dearmore (1897-1969), a Baptist leader in Texas; William Aberhart (1878-1943) in western Canada; and Philip Mauro of New York City. Mauro was definitely a fundamentalist leader. He contributed at least two articles to *The Fundamentals*, the series of books from which the name “fundamentalist” was derived. And he was also a defender of the King James Bible and an opponent of modern textual criticism.

CONCLUSION

I am very sad about all of this. Though I have never had a personal association with Bob Jones University and though I cannot agree with all of their positions, I have never considered them an enemy. I have visited the BJ campus numerous times; I many friends who are BJ grads; and I am thankful for the many good things that they stand for in these dark apostate days.

Why do they feel that they must stoop to misrepresentation and straw man tactics on the Bible text issue? Why do they attempt to make every defender of the King James Bible appear cultic in the eyes of their associates? Why not allow an open and honest debate and allow men to make their own decision on the merits of the case? It will cause division? Probably, but since when did fundamentalists take the position that unity is more important than truth? Why don’t they admit that some of their closest friends, such as Ian Paisley, are “King James Only”? If the position is cultic, then consistency would require that they break fellowship with him and others like him in their circle. The Bible says we are to “observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Timothy 5:21).

The Bible version issue is not a secondary issue. I am convinced that to be wrong on that is to enter a path that eventually will result in apostasy. The Bible is the foundation for everything we believe and do. Thus the Bible text and version issue is of the very highest importance.

Just take a look at those who defend the modern versions. That vast group includes the Roman Catholic Church, the theological liberals, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Charismatics, all of the liberal Protestant denominations yoked with the World Council of Churches, the New Evangelicals, and the Charismatics. In contrast, the King James Bible has been the Bible of the Fundamentalist movement for 80 years and certainly of the fundamental Baptist movement of the past 50 years.

The founder of Bob Jones University preached only from the King James Bible and said, "The King James Version is the best translation we have ever had" (Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., *The Sword Scrapbook*, 1969). Even today Bob Jones University, which has advertised itself as "the bastion of fundamentalism," says that it uses only the King James Bible.

The change from the King James Bible to the modern versions, which is just now beginning to occur in some fundamentalist circles, is a dramatic change that will bring many associated changes. I am convinced that this step will lead to New Evangelicalism and, for some, even to Modernism.

This I believe with all of my heart. You cannot maintain a fundamentalist position for long without a dogmatic, absolute "thus saith the Lord." It cannot be done. If a man has confidence in one Bible he can stand dogmatically and immovably. If, though, he believes that the Word of God is contained mystically among all of the texts and versions and only partially in any one, he begins to lose his dogmatism. He cannot preach the Bible with the same sort of conviction as the first man.

If I am wrong, prove it graciously with facts and with the Word of God, instead of using cheap tactics in an attempt to blacklist me and thus to keep me from receiving a proper hearing.

Philip Mauro's book *Which Version?* is available at the Way of Life Literature web site:

<http://www.wayoflife.org/articles/indexarticles.htm>

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